

SPECIAL PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS IN
THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF
FORT DODGE, IOWA

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Merna Smith
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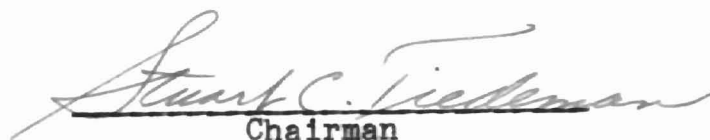
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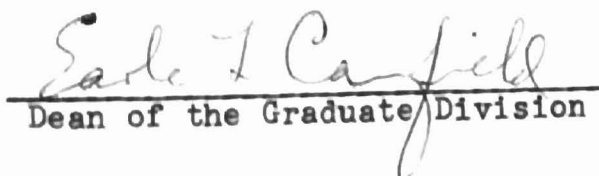
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Approved by Committee:


Chairman


Dean of the Graduate Division

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Teachers and administrators are all primarily concerned with the quality of the instruction afforded the pupils in the school systems. "Whether we wish to admit it or not, our substitute teachers, as part-time members of the teaching staff, directly influence the over-all institutional program."¹ Each classroom day should be of equal importance in making available worthwhile material for the student.²

Absences of regular teachers are inevitable in any school system. When such absences occur, a substitute teacher must step in to carry on the classroom instruction. Any effort to make the substitute teacher and the substitute teaching program in the system more effective will help to make a better learning situation.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Substitute teachers face many problems common to their teaching situation which are

¹Carl H. Peterson, "Train Your Own Substitute Teachers," School Executive, LXXVIII (September, 1958), 51-53.

²Edwin A. Juckett, "Substitute Teacher Makes the Team," American School Board Journal, CXXI (November, 1955), 44-46.

not encountered to the same extent by the regular teaching staff. These special problems often reduce the quality of instruction which the substitute teacher can offer. It was the writer's intent to bring to light the most troublesome and commonly recurring problems of the substitute teachers in the Fort Dodge, Iowa, school system.

Importance of the study. A total of 160,000 substitute teachers--or one substitute for every six full-time teachers--are "on call" throughout the country. Their total teaching time is 6,800,000 school days a year, which is equal to the teaching done by all the regular teachers in the states of Colorado, Connecticut, South Dakota, and Maine.¹

These nation-wide figures reflect the importance of the substitute teaching program and the individual substitute teacher in a specific school system.

In 1955, Sam M. Lambert, of the National Education Association, made the first nation-wide study of substitute teachers.² William G. Carr, Executive Secretary, National Education Association, said:

The report may well be viewed as the first major bench mark in this largely unexplored field of educational endeavor.

¹"Substitute Teachers in the Public Schools," School Life, XXXVI (June, 1955), 101.

²National Education Association, "Substitute Teachers in the Public School, 1953-54," National Education Association Research Bulletin, XXXIII, No. 1 (February, 1955).

First, it gives the profession its first accurate and detailed pictures of the current status of day-to-day substitute teachers in public-school systems of various sizes. It tells us something about their personal traits and characteristics, their professional qualifications, their salaries and salary schedules. It provides information on the extent to which they share in such benefits as retirement and tenure protection which are now available to most regular teachers. It offers statistics on certain characteristics of the typical substitute teaching assignment.

Second, the study provides some tested ways in which regular school personnel can help to make the substitute teacher's work more pleasant and effective. Separate sections are devoted to how the regular teacher, who is likely to be absent, can help the substitute do a better job of teaching, how the staff of a school can make the substitute feel more at home and a part of the regular faculty team, how the administration of a school system can create better working conditions and facilitate high quality substitute teaching service.¹

The value of comprehensive studies such as Lambert's is increased when follow-up studies are done on the local level. The Fort Dodge, Iowa, school system maintains a corps of substitute teachers who are on call on a day-to-day basis. This writer worked as a substitute teacher in this system from March, 1960, through June, 1961. Because of this experience, the writer became interested in the problems and challenges which arise when substitute teachers seek to do their job well.

The task of the substitute teacher is not easy. It requires a special kind of ingenuity and self-confidence. But the good substitute teacher is a vital link in the chain

¹Ibid., p. 4.

of a child's learning experiences.¹

In doing research in this area, one finds a lack of information about the substitute and his problems. This lack of literature illustrates a commensurate lack of interest in the substitute teacher.

Benefit can come to the teaching program of the school system every time the educator thinks about and makes plans to increase the effectiveness of the substitute teacher. With this belief in mind, the writer undertook this study with the sincere hope that it would help to increase the substitute's effectiveness in the Fort Dodge Public Schools.

II. LIMITATIONS

The questionnaire survey method was used to gather the primary source data for this study. This technique has certain inherent weaknesses which must be recognized in order to make an objective evaluation of the results.

Among those surveyed, there was probably a difference in the interpretation of the purpose of the study and the individual questions included in the questionnaire. The written question stood by itself. Every effort was made to be specific and to strive for a complete response on the part of the recipient. However, the writer could not be present

¹National Education Association, "How To Be a Good Substitute Teacher" (Washington: National Education Association Research Division, August, 1955), p. 11. (Mimeographed.)

to explain the exact meaning intended for each question. This left the individual interpretation by the respondent open to misunderstanding and to a difference in value judgments of the words involved. There was no way to completely eliminate these differences in interpretation.

The frame of mind of the respondent at the time he completed the questionnaire was important to the validity of the answers obtained. Interest in the problem on the part of the individual completing the questionnaire had a direct bearing on his desire to give an accurate and complete reply to the questions. Certain questions may have had emotional overtones which influenced the response of some of those surveyed.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The writer found only three doctoral dissertations written in this area.¹ Lambert's dissertation, "Status and Working Relationships of Substitute Teachers in Urban School Systems," was the most current and was based upon the experiences and attitudes of substitute teachers on a nation-wide basis. He surveyed school systems varying in size from 2,500 to more than 100,000 students. He sent 5,000 questionnaires to substitute teachers in these systems and achieved a return of 57.9 per cent.

¹National Research Council, Doctoral Dissertations Accepted by American Universities, Numbers 1-22 (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1934-55); and Dissertation Abstracts, April, 1960, XX, No. 10 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc., 1960).

Lambert found the professional preparation of the substitute compared favorably with the full-time teachers and that 83 per cent of the substitutes were at one time full-time teachers. The typical substitute was 43 years old, married, and the mother of one or two school age children. She worked 39 days during the school year 1953-54. Her average daily salary was \$12.21 or a little more than half as much as her full-time colleagues. According to his survey, women outnumbered men substitutes by fourteen to one.

Lambert's study showed 64.6 per cent of the total sample reporting having four or more years of college. Of the group of 645 substitute teachers who taught in towns with populations of 10,000 to 29,999, 61.2 per cent had four or more years of college training. Of this same group, 35 per cent had between two and four years of college work.¹

This study indicated the following items were the most troublesome problems encountered by substitutes: inadequate lesson plans, insufficient advance notice of teaching assignment, difficulty in maintaining student discipline, insufficient information on school routines, lack of friendly and helpful attitude on the part of the regular teaching staff, unfamiliarity with the use of audio-visual equipment and materials.²

¹Sam M. Lambert, "Status and Working Relationships of Substitute Teachers in Urban School Systems" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, George Washington University, 1955).

²National Education Association, op. cit., pp. 7-53.

Looking at it from an administrator's point of view, Blum stated:

The student, knowing that the substitute is there for only a day or two, attempts to take advantage of this fact. The school administrators frequently feel a substitute is there to be a policeman, and grimace if any attempt is made to teach.¹

He observed that certain things could be done to improve both the substitute teachers' effectiveness and the attitude of the administrator and the regular staff toward them. First, adequate plan books should be prepared and all teachers should be required to leave them in a predetermined place in their desks. Second, the teacher should delegate tasks to specific students, and the assignments should be placed prominently in the plan or roll book. Third, each school should have mimeographed an instruction sheet which should be handed to each substitute as he reports in the morning. Fourth, if possible, the substitute should be told when he is called what he is going to teach, and, if possible, he should be called to teach subjects related to his own field. Fifth, the over-helpful teacher next door is sometimes a curse by interference which upsets the substitute's rapport with the class. Sixth, the substitute should be expected to teach and not be regarded as a policeman.²

¹Albert A. Blum, "The Substitute Teacher--An Administrative Problem," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, XXXII (September, 1958), 86.

²Ibid., pp. 86-88.

A National Education Association Journal article on substitute teaching was headed by the startling title, "Your Substitute--Baby Sitter or Real Teacher?" In discussing the need for adequate lesson plans, McMahon said "Most substitutes are basically good teachers. However, a substitute has two strikes against him. It is the regular teacher's responsibility to save that third strike."¹ The regular teacher must leave some plans for the substitute. If there has been no planning, the substitute can do little more than try to keep the students occupied and maintain discipline.²

A more radical plea for upgrading the substitute teacher's position was made by Harlow and Andrews, who advocated the use of specially qualified teachers in this area. They felt that today's use of part-time employees as substitute teachers is administratively as efficient as the horse and buggy is in transportation. They further stated that teachers in this category should be the most flexible, most congenial, and best-trained people the system can afford. They should be people of marked ability to achieve rapport with pupils on very short acquaintance. Teachers with these qualifications clearly would be drawn from among the ablest teachers in any system and would be regular full-time

¹James L. McMahon, "Your Substitute--Baby Sitter or Real Teacher?" National Education Association Journal, XXXIV (November, 1955), 486.

²Ibid., pp. 486-487.

tenure-holding faculty members. They probably would require some salary advantages over teachers who do not move about, and they probably should be provided with travel allowances.

Teaching strange classes for short intervals is the most difficult teaching job in the school. If anything much more than baby sitting is to be accomplished, the teachers must not be merely as good as the regular teachers; they must be much better. They must have experiences varied in both grade level and subject matter. They must have personal qualities which lead very quickly to rapport with the pupils. They must be regular employees retained by the district.¹

A more optimistic view of the advantages of substitute teaching was presented by Latimer, who was a substitute teacher in the schools of Toronto, Ontario. In graphic phrases, she listed the basic qualifications of substitute teachers as: "brave heart, strong back, thick skin, three-way vision, (forward, backward, sideward), the patience of Job, a sense of humor, and stout walking shoes."²

Although she pointed out that there are many problems connected with substitute teaching, she also indicated that there are many well-mannered, eager classes that make teaching a real joy. According to her, some of the distinct

¹James G. Harlow and John H. M. Andrews, "For Substitutes Use Your Better Teachers," The Nation's Schools, LXXVI (October, 1956), 51-52.

²Beatrice J. Latimer, "Teaching On The Run," The Instructor, LXVIII (October, 1958), 17.

advantages of substitute teaching are: "No yearly plans to make, few papers to mark, no reports to do; you constantly see new faces, find nothing routine, have few dull moments."¹ She felt the substitute teacher had a challenging, humorous, though sometimes hectic life.

IV. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this study, "substitute teachers" are those who are certified by the state and approved by a school system to teach on a part-time basis. They must be available to fill in for regular teachers who are ill or absent for various other reasons. They are on call at short notice for teaching assignments on a day-by-day basis.

V. PROCEDURE

Upon completion of the review of literature, the problem and purpose of this study were discussed with several substitute teachers and administrators. Their opinions were requested on the general outline of the questionnaire and on specific questions which they believed should be included. Notes were compiled on the recommendations of these individuals and were used as a reference in formulating the original questionnaire.

The writer then contacted Carl T. Feelhaver, superintendent of the Fort Dodge school system, and explained the

¹Ibid.

purpose of the study to him. He was very receptive to the proposal and offered any assistance that he might extend. He made available a list of all teachers on the current substitute teacher's roster.

The next step was to build the questionnaire.¹ It included questions about the personal and professional status of the substitute teachers, a closed section in which they gave their answers to questions covering problem areas, and an open section in which they listed what they considered to be their greatest problems. Another section was included in which they could make recommendations for methods to improve the effectiveness of substitute teachers.

Extensive reference was made to the existing literature which had been reviewed previously and to the opinions and recommendations of the substitute teachers and administrators who had been contacted. When the questionnaire was completed, it was submitted for criticism to two principals, Paul E. Seydel and Marion Dekker, and to six substitute teachers who had taught during the period included in this study. The questionnaire was then revised in the light of their constructive criticisms.

All substitute teachers on the current roster were contacted by telephone. The purpose of the study was explained to them and their cooperation in completing and returning a questionnaire was requested. During the

¹Appendix.

conversation, it was verified that each individual contacted had taught as a substitute in the Fort Dodge schools at some time during the period included in this study. Those who had not taught during this period were eliminated from the group to be surveyed and a questionnaire was not sent to them.

Based upon their agreement to cooperate, a questionnaire was immediately mailed to them along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. There were forty substitute teachers who had taught during the period under consideration. All of them agreed to complete and return the questionnaire. The first questionnaire was forwarded on March 2, 1961, and a 100 per cent return was achieved upon receipt of the last outstanding questionnaire on April 7, 1961.

CHAPTER II

THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

I. PERSONAL DATA

A nation-wide study of full-time teachers in rural school systems in 1951-52¹ revealed a median age of 40.1 years as compared with a median age of 37.2 for the substitute teachers in this study. As shown in Table I, the highest concentration for the teachers in this study was in the age group 26 through 30 with a total of thirteen people. Only one of the group was 25 years of age or less and only four were 61 years or over.

TABLE I

AGE OF FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS, 1960-61

Age Groups - Years	Women	Men	Total
20 to 25	1	0	1
26 to 30	13	0	13
31 to 35	5	0	5
36 to 40	4	0	4
41 to 45	4	1	5
46 to 50	3	0	3
51 to 55	2	0	2
56 to 60	3	0	3
61 or over	4	0	4
Total	39	1	40
Median age	37.2 years		
Number reporting	40		

¹National Education Association, Research Division, "Rural Teachers in 1951-52," Research Bulletin, XXXI (February, 1952), 54.

There is a popular opinion that more men are needed in the teaching profession. This survey revealed no men among elementary substitute teachers and only one man among secondary substitute teachers. From the literature studied, it appears that the smaller the town the fewer the men in substitute teaching.

Only four of those surveyed, or 10 per cent, were members of a family in which either the husband or wife were full-time teachers.

Most substitute teachers have many outside responsibilities and activities. Thirty-six of the group were married, one widowed and only three were single. The ratio of single to married women was one to thirteen. Thirty-six, or 90 per cent, of those surveyed had one or more children, as shown in Table II. This group had a total of eighty-six children. Twenty-six were under six years of age and forty-four were of school age. Eight of the people in this study also had outside employment.

Although the substitute teachers surveyed had an average of two and four-tenths children, only four had other persons wholly or partially dependent upon them for financial support. It seems reasonable to conclude that husbands were supporting the family and substitute work was not done primarily for essential income.

Each individual was asked to answer questions about her reasons for substitute teaching. Each person could check

TABLE II

NUMBER AND AGE OF CHILDREN OF FORT DODGE
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS, 1960-61

Classification	Ages of Substitute Teachers									Totals
	20 to 25	26 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	41 to 45	46 to 50	51 to 55	56 to 60	61 and over	
Numbers of substi- tutes who have no children	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	4
Number of substi- tutes who have children	1	13	5	3	5	3	2	2	2	36
Number of children										
one	1	4	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	9
two	0	5	2	0	3	2	0	1	0	13
three	0	2	1	3	1	0	2	0	0	9
four	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
five	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
six	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
seven	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Number of children in various age groups:										
under 6	1	19	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	26
6 to 17	0	9	8	8	13	2	4	0	0	44
18 or over	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	3	6	16
Total number of children	1	28	12	9	16	5	6	3	6	86

more than one response if it applied to her. In constructing Table III, each response was recorded separately. Twenty-two classified themselves as married women who were former full-time teachers but who had family responsibilities which now allowed them to do only part-time work.

TABLE III
FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS' REASONS FOR
TEACHING, 1960-61

Reason	Number	Per Cent
1. (Married women) Former full-time teacher, family responsibilities allow only part-time work . . .	22	55.0
2. Need outlet for interests and something to occupy time . . .	19	47.5
3. (Married women) Husband's income sufficient to provide essentials, substitute teacher to provide extra income	18	45.0
4. Need the income	11	27.5
5. Prefer substitute teaching to regular teaching	7	17.5
6. Retired, not eligible for full-time teaching	3	7.5
7.5. Substituting only until satisfactory full-time position can be found	1	2.5
7.5. Temporary financial difficulties make it necessary that family income be augmented	1	2.5

Nineteen substitutes worked because they needed an outlet for interests or something to occupy their time. Eighteen of the married women worked simply because they wanted to and because they could earn extra but not essential income.

It is significant to note that twenty felt that substituting in the Fort Dodge schools would help them get a regular position in the Fort Dodge school system if they desired it at some future time.

II. PROFESSIONAL STATUS

Table IV discloses that twenty-two of the total group had four or more years of college and of this group four had five or more years. Thus, 55 per cent of the group had four or more years of college. All the substitutes teaching on the secondary level were in this category. Of the eighteen remaining, only one had less than two years of college training. Twelve had two years and five had three years, or 42.5 per cent had at least two but less than four years. This appears significant since Iowa until 1960 issued elementary certificates to those with two years of training.

When comparing Lambert's nation-wide study with the Fort Dodge study, it can be seen that 6.2 per cent of Lambert's reporting group had at least four years of college. The total of those who had at least two but less than four years of college was 7.5 per cent higher in the Fort Dodge group.

TABLE IV
EDUCATION OF FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS
BY AGE GROUPS, 1960-61

Years of College	<u>Ages of substitute teachers</u>									To- tals
	20 to 25	26 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	41 to 45	46 to 50	51 to 55	56 to 60	61 and over	
One or less	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Two	0	7	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	12
Three	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	5
Four	1	6	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	18
Five or more	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	4

Table V indicates that during the last seven years, twenty-six of the group completed some college work. Only four had no college work in the past fourteen years. Three individuals were taking work at the time the questionnaire was completed.

All of the teachers in the group surveyed had had full-time teaching experience. As shown in Table VI, fifteen had had one or two years full-time experience. Twelve of the forty had had nine or more years of full-time teaching experience. Fifteen of the group had substituted in other systems.

Table VII shows that eighteen of the group had substituted in the Fort Dodge system for only one to two years.

TABLE V

DATE OF MOST RECENT COLLEGE WORK OF FORT DODGE
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS, 1960-61

Year	Number	Per Cent
1961	1	2.5
1960	5	12.5
1959	5	12.5
1957-58	9	22.5
1955-56	6	15.0
1953-54	5	12.5
1951-52	1	2.5
1949-50	2	5.0
1947-48	2	5.0
Before 1947	4	10.0
Total	40	100.0

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF YEARS OF FULL-TIME TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF
FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS, 1960-61

Years of Full-time Experience	Number	Per Cent
None	0	0.0
Less than 1 year	0	0.0
1-2 years	15	37.5
3-4 "	4	10.0
5-6 "	6	15.0
7-8 "	2	5.0
9-10 "	4	10.0
11-12 "	1	2.5
13-14 "	1	2.5
15-16 "	1	2.5
17-18 "	1	2.5
19-20 "	3	7.5
20 years or over	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Eleven people, or 27.5 per cent, had substituted in this system for five to ten years.

TABLE VII
NUMBER OF YEARS OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF
FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS, 1960-61

Years of Substitute Experience	Number	Per Cent
Less than 1 year	4	10.0
1- 2 years	18	45.0
3- 4 years	6	15.0
5- 6 years	8	20.0
7- 8 years	1	2.5
9-10 years	2	5.0
11-12 years	0	0.0
13-14 years	0	0.0
15-16 years	0	0.0
17-18 years	0	0.0
19-20 years	0	0.0
20 years or over	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

All substitute teachers had a certificate which qualified them to teach in their area. Twenty-two were qualified in elementary, thirteen had secondary certificates, and five had both elementary and secondary certificates.

Twenty of the group indicated they were able to operate a motion picture projector and thirty-two were able to operate a slide projector. Twelve replied that they had used audio-visual aids in their most recent teaching assignment.

Only two of the total group stated that they belonged to any professional organization and only one of these attended meetings. It appears to be significant that all forty indicated that they had never been asked to join any professional organization since beginning their work as substitutes.

At the beginning of the 1959-60 school year orientation meetings were held for elementary teachers only. As shown in Table VIII, thirteen people in the survey had attended this meeting. Twelve of these thought this meeting was very helpful; one felt it was not particularly beneficial. Of the remaining twenty-seven who had never attended an orientation meeting in Fort Dodge, twenty-three expressed interest in future meetings of this nature. Twenty-six, or 60.5 per cent, were also interested in holding informal discussions with other substitute teachers.

III. TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

Each substitute was asked several questions regarding her most recent teaching experience. This excluded the assignment in which she was engaged at the time she completed the questionnaire used in this study. As indicated in Table IX, eleven people stated they had notice of an assignment by 9:00 P.M. on the day prior to the assignment. Twenty received notice of an assignment between 7:00 and 8:00 A.M. on the day of the assignment. Seven people gave no answer to this question. Thirty-five felt they had sufficient notice to reach the school on time.

TABLE VIII

FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION IN AND
ATTITUDE TOWARD ORIENTATION MEETINGS

Participation	Number	Per Cent
Attended orientation meetings	13	32.5
Found orientation meetings very helpful .	12	92.3*
Did not find orientation meetings helpful	1	7.7*
Have not attended orientation meetings . .	27	67.5**
<u>Interest</u>		
Interested in orientation meetings . . .	23	85.2***
Not interested in orientation meetings . .	4	14.8***
Interested in informal discussions with other substitute teachers	26	65.0
Not interested in informal discussions with other substitute teachers	9	22.5
Some interest in informal discussions with other substitute teachers	5	12.5

*Orientation meetings were held for elementary teachers only in the fall of 1959.

**Based on 13 who attended orientation meetings in the fall of 1959.

***Based on the 27 who had not had an opportunity to attend orientation meetings.

TABLE IX

PRIOR NOTICE GIVEN TO FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS
BEFORE REPORTING FOR WORK

Time Notice Was Given	Number	Per Cent
Notified two days or more before	3	7.5
Notified one day before	1	2.5
9:00 P.M. day before	7	17.5
7:00 - 7:30 A.M. same day	13	32.5
7:30 - 8:00 A.M. same day	2	5.0
8:00 - 8:30 A.M. same day	4	10.0
8:30 - 9:00 A.M. same day	0	0.0
After 9:00 A.M. same day	2	5.0
No answer to this question	8	20.0

Twenty-three reported that their last assignment was for one day only.

TABLE X

LENGTH OF LAST ASSIGNMENT OF FORT DODGE
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS, 1960-61

Length of Assignment	Number
One-half day	2
One day	23
Two days	7
Three days	2
Four days	2
One week	2
More than one week	1
No answer	1

From Table XI it can be seen that the median teacher taught 10.5 days between September 1, 1960, and March 1, 1961. During the same period the salary was \$15.00 per teaching day. Ten people indicated that they thought the substitute teacher's salaries should be higher.

TABLE XI

TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS TAUGHT BY FORT DODGE SUBSTITUTES
FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 1960, TO MARCH 1, 1961

Number of Days Taught	Number Reporting
1	5
1-1/2	2
2	1
2-1/2	1
3	3
4	3
4-1/2	1
6	1
7	1
8-1/2	1
10	1
11	2
12	1
15	3
18	1
20	3
22	1
25	1
30	2
33-1/2	1
37-1/2	1
40	1
42	1
50	1
66	1

Most Fort Dodge substitute teachers taught in areas in which they were certified. Only one individual was not certified to teach in the assigned area while four were only partially qualified. However, thirty-five were fully certified to teach in the area in which they had substituted. Nearly all the substitutes, thirty-nine, were told what subjects or grade they would teach when they accepted the assignment.

The substitute teacher needs some suggestions and ideas about the work that is being done in the class in order to make a contribution to the development of the group. The regular teacher is the only individual who can give exact information about the progress of his students. The substitutes were asked to report on the availability of such materials. Thirty-two found adequate lesson plans available. Eight found the lesson plans incomplete or in some way not understandable. Teachers' guides, books, and answer booklets were on hand in thirty-four of the situations. Fourteen found no seating charts.

Twenty found adequate information about classroom procedure such as grouping and passing out of books. Only six were given personal information about individual students.

Twenty-six felt the students had been prepared by the regular teacher for the possible presence of a substitute. In fact, twenty-three found students had been assigned to help them with routine matters such as roll taking.

Thirty-three of the people surveyed did not have an opportunity to confer by telephone with the regular classroom teacher before taking over the class. Of the seven who did, all found it most helpful. Thirteen of the remaining thirty-three believed such a conference would have been advantageous.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this study to identify certain problems encountered by substitute teachers in the Fort Dodge school system. The problem areas considered were those which were peculiar to the substitute teaching staff because of the special nature of their teaching assignment.

A questionnaire was submitted to all persons listed as substitute teachers in the Fort Dodge school system during the school year 1960-61. It included sections on the personal and professional status of the group, a closed section covering problem areas, an open section for listing greatest problems, and another open section for making recommendations for methods to improve the substitute teacher's effectiveness. Upon receipt of all outstanding questionnaires the writer tabulated the information developed in them and set forth in a series of tables that information which was most significant in consideration of the problem.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Compilation of the data developed from the questionnaire showed that this group believed that there were several problem

areas where improvement could be made to increase the effectiveness of the substitute teaching staff. One of these areas was the lack of a sufficient number of teaching days to keep the substitute vitally interested in her work. The median number of days of substitute teaching was 10.5 for the period from September 1, 1960 to March 1, 1961. It can be readily seen that out of a total of 113 school days during this period the median substitute teacher taught only 9.2 per cent of the total teaching days.

Commensurate with the problem of an insufficient amount of teaching time was that of an insufficient income derived from teaching to stimulate the substitute to devote the time and preparation to her assignment which would be desirable. Ten of the total group surveyed voluntarily indicated that an improved salary schedule would increase their interest in the program. When this is correlated with the fact that the median teacher earned \$157.50 during the first six months of the school year it can be seen that a better salary schedule must be developed if a better qualified substitute teaching corps is going to be obtained.

Lack of participation in professional organizations was another problem area. As a group, the substitutes in this study did not participate in professional organizations and as a result tended to feel they were in a group apart. This reinforced their feeling that their work was of secondary importance to that of the regular teacher.

Orientation meetings were held only for elementary teachers. Of the thirteen who attended these meetings twelve, or 92.3 per cent, felt that they were very helpful. Of the twenty-seven who had not attended orientation meetings, twenty-three, or 85.2 per cent, expressed an interest in such meetings. From these data it is apparent that orientation meetings have met with an excellent reception from those who have attended them and would be received with much interest by the remaining group. Twenty-six, or 65 per cent of the total group, indicated a definite interest in informal discussions with other substitute teachers.

Eight, or 20 per cent, of the group found lesson plans incomplete or not understandable. Fourteen found no seating charts.

Twenty-six felt the students had been prepared by the regular teacher for the possible presence of a substitute; but only twenty-three found students had been assigned to help them with routine matters such as roll taking.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is a primary interest of the Fort Dodge schools to maintain the highest possible level of instruction throughout the system. Every classroom day should be considered to be of equal importance to all other days. Since a certain number of teacher absences is inevitable it can be seen that as the effectiveness of the substitute teaching staff is increased the

total effectiveness of the year's teaching program is also increased. A strong case can be made illustrating that because of the transient nature of the teaching assignment, unfamiliarity with the students, lack of knowledge of classroom and school procedures, and disruption in the continuity of presentation of subject matter that in some respects a substitute is required to be better qualified than the regular teacher.

Two of the major problem areas revealed by this study were those of a relatively low number of days taught by the substitute and the small amount of income derived from teaching. Because of these two factors, the substitute often did not find her work sufficiently challenging to stimulate her best efforts in the teaching situation. To the extent that this was true the over-all quality of the teaching program for the school year was made less effective.

It is the writer's belief that a major step could be made toward resolving these two problems and all other problems under consideration by establishing a selected group of substitute teachers. The nature of the recommendations to follow will be heavily weighted toward the premise that such a select group is desirable and would provide a more professional standard in the substitute teaching corps. On the other hand, many of the recommendations will apply equally to all substitutes and will be considered to have merit for the total group.

In order to determine the number in the select group of substitutes, it would be necessary for the Fort Dodge school system to gather data on the total number of absences during the school year. This could further be broken down into total absences on the secondary and elementary level. From this information it could then be determined how many selected substitutes would be needed as determined by the total number of days of substitute teaching they desired.

It is not the writer's intent to imply that the regular day-by-day substitute is not needed or should be eliminated because of the organization of a selected substitute group. This day-by-day corps of substitutes would be maintained and would continue to operate much as it has in the past. The purpose of this recommendation is to make available a group of substitute teachers that would be better qualified for the work and more familiar with the children and the classroom situation in the schools in which they are called upon to teach.

The following criteria might be used as a partial guide in choosing this group of selected substitute teachers: expressed desire for a certain amount of substitute teaching, educational background, ability to work well as a substitute, professional interest, and desire and ability to teach at a specified level such as all elementary or all secondary. These and other criteria which the administration would develop could be used in gathering together a select group of substitute

teachers which would form the nucleus of those available to step in and fill the normal requirements for substitute teaching assignments.

As indicated previously in this chapter, one of the major problems for substitutes, that of insufficient number of days taught, would be solved by the establishment of a select substitute group based upon the needs for substitutes as determined by the information collected by the administration. The teachers in this group would have a good indication at the beginning of the school year of the total number of teaching days they might expect. Based upon this commitment, they then should be available to teach when the need arises. Those in the day-by-day substitute corps would continue to function much as they had in the past. The total number of substitute teachers both select and day-by-day would probably be less. However, this organizational plan should lead to a more highly qualified group which would be available to fulfill the normal substitute teaching needs.

Salary is a second consideration which materially affects the teacher's concept of her own status and of the performance expected of her. A salary schedule more closely approximating the daily rate of the regular teaching staff would certainly enhance the prestige and professional interest of the substitute teaching group.

The results of the survey showed only two substitutes were members of a professional organization. Some felt

unwelcome and none of the group had been asked to join such an organization.

This is a problem partly because of the temporary nature of the work. However, there are undoubtedly substitutes who would welcome an opportunity to attend meetings of a professional organization and to participate in their activities.

Such membership would be desirable for substitutes as well as regular teachers. It would offer the substitute a means of keeping up with trends, professional ideas, and developing a closer relationship with the regular teachers in the system. Through this type of membership the substitute would develop a feeling of importance in the profession. All substitutes, and especially those in the select teaching group, should be encouraged to join and participate in professional organization.

As outlined in the conclusion section of this chapter, orientation meetings were found to be helpful by those who had had an opportunity to attend them, and were felt to be desirable by the majority of the group who had not attended such meetings. It is the writer's belief that this is an important area where much could be done to bring the substitute teaching group closer to the regular staff. The prestige of the substitute and her feeling of making a definite contribution to the teaching situation would be greatly advanced by better identification with the regular staff and a better understanding

of the methods, goals, and philosophy of the Fort Dodge school system.

These orientation meetings could be conducted at the same time as those for the regular teachers. Administrative personnel could outline the goals and philosophy of the school system and the part the substitute group plays in achieving them.

An explanation of special services such as guidance, health program, audio-visual aids, and the hot lunch program could be made by those in charge so the substitutes would have a better understanding of their functions. Another subject area would be a review and open discussion of the regulations governing substitutes. A discussion of trends in education that are reflected in the local program would be helpful in keeping the substitute abreast of recent developments.

Another subject that should be beneficial during an orientation period would be a consideration of the ways in which the substitute can be helpful to the regular teacher. This could be presented by members of the regular teaching staff. At the same time provisions should be made for an exchange of ideas between the substitute and representatives of the regular teaching staff. During this discussion, some of the most common and recurring problems pertaining to the relationship between the two groups and the respective teaching situations could be considered. Through such an exchange of ideas a better understanding of these problem areas and the best way to handle them could be obtained.

It would be most useful at some time during these orientation meetings for an administration representative to explain in detail routine matters affecting substitutes. Items such as where the substitute should sign in for the teaching day, where she should pick up the schedule, what time she should go to lunch, and where she should place her wraps could be covered. This would lead to a smoother functioning of the substitute teacher upon reporting for any given assignment.

Well-prepared lesson plans must be available if continuity of the classroom work is to be maintained in the regular teacher's absence. Although thirty-six, or 80 per cent of the group, did find complete lesson plans it is significant that 20 per cent found them to be incomplete or not fully understandable. It is necessary that comprehensive and readily understandable lesson plans be available in every classroom at all times so a substitute may take charge of the classroom and continue the work to the best advantage.

Fourteen of the total group were unable to find seating charts during their most recent assignment. Seating charts should be required in all classrooms so the substitute can readily identify students, call on them by name for recitation, and immediately identify any students who are unruly or have other special problems. If the substitute teacher is unable to call the students by name she lacks information which is necessary to facilitate smooth handling of a substitute teaching situation.

Seventeen substitutes found that in their most recent teaching assignment no students had been assigned to help them with routine matters such as roll taking. A substitute can derive much assistance through the help of a trustworthy student. The writer believes that the name of one or two such students for each class should be available on a card kept on file in the school office. Other information which would be very helpful could be on such a card. This should include lunch schedule, assembly seating assignments, fire drill exits, and the names of other teachers whom she might call upon for assistance.

Students should be prepared by their regular teacher for her possible absence. She should emphasize that any substitute who may take her place will be fully qualified and should be shown every courtesy by the members of the class. She should also point out that the substitute will have a lesson plan and will know exactly what work is to be covered in her absence.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Personal Data

1. Your name _____ Sex _____
2. Age: Check one.

___20 thru 25 years	___46 thru 50 years
___26 thru 30 years	___51 thru 55 years
___31 thru 35 years	___56 thru 60 years
___36 thru 40 years	___61 years or over
___41 thru 45 years	
3. Marital status: Single ___; Married ___; Divorced ___; Widowed ___.
4. Does your husband (wife) also teach? ___ Where? _____
5. How many children do you have under 6 years of age ___? from 6 thru 17 ___? 18 or over ___?
6. How many persons (other than yourself) are wholly or partially dependent upon you for financial support? _____
7. Are you now on the Fort Dodge substitute teaching list? _____
8. Reasons for substitute teaching (check all those that apply to you--you may find that two or more apply).
 - ___a. Need the income.
 - ___b. Substituting only until satisfactory full-time position can be found.
 - ___c. Retired, not eligible for full-time teaching.
 - ___d. Need outlet for interests and something to occupy time.
 - ___e. (Married women) Former full-time teacher, family responsibilities allow only part-time work.
 - ___f. (Married women) Husband's income sufficient to provide essentials, substitute teach to provide extra income.
 - ___g. Temporary financial difficulties make it necessary that family income be augmented.
 - ___h. Prefer substitute teaching to regular teaching.
 - ___i. Other (explain) _____

9. Do you have any employment other than teaching? If so, explain. _____
10. Do you think substituting in the Fort Dodge schools will help you get a regular position in Fort Dodge, if you desire it? _____

Professional Status

1. College training: Undergraduate ___ years;
Graduate ___ hours.
2. What degree do you hold? _____
3. When did you take your last college course? _____
4. Are you taking any college work now? _____
How many hours? _____
5. Have you ever taught full time? _____ How long? _____
What years? _____
6. How long have you been a substitute teacher in Fort Dodge? _____
7. Have you done substitute teaching in other cities? _____
8. What type of teaching certificate do you hold? (i.e. limited elementary, standard secondary, et cetera.)

9. What subjects or grades are you certified to teach? _____

10. Can you operate a motion picture projector? _____
A slide or film strip projector? _____
11. Do you belong to any professional organizations (i.e. National Education Association, Iowa State Education Association, Fort Dodge Teacher's Association)? _____
If so, which ones? _____
12. Since you started substituting, have you ever been asked to join such a group? _____
13. If you belong to a professional organization, do you attend meetings? _____ If "yes," which one(s)?

14. If you are not a member, do you attend meetings? _____
If "yes," which one(s)? _____
15. Have you ever attended any orientation meetings for substitute teachers in Fort Dodge? _____ If "yes," did you find them helpful? _____
16. If you have not attended these meetings previously, would you be interested in attending such meetings in the future? _____
17. Would you be interested in informal discussion meetings with other substitute teachers? _____

Substitute Teaching Experiences

The following questions apply to your most recent substitute teaching experiences. If you are now on a substitute teaching assignment, base your answers on the last one, not the present one.

1. Approximately when (day and hour) were you called to teach? _____
2. Was it sufficient notice for you to reach the school on time? _____
3. How long did the assignment last? _____
4. Had you ever taught for this same teacher before? _____
5. Was the assignment in one of your preferred areas? _____
6. Were you certified to teach in this area? _____
7. List the grades and/or subjects you taught. _____
8. Were you told what subjects or grades you were to teach when you accepted the assignment? _____
9. Were lesson plans available? _____
10. Were they understandable to you? _____
11. Were teachers' guides, books, and answer booklets on hand? _____
12. Did the teacher leave seating charts? _____
13. Was there information about classroom procedure? (that is, grouping, passing out of books, et cetera) _____

14. Did the teacher leave any personal information about the students that might be helpful to you? (that is, Jane has a hearing loss, et cetera) _____
15. Had the regular teacher assigned students to help with routine matters such as taking roll in the event of his absence? _____
16. Do you think the students were prepared by the teacher for the possible presence of a substitute? _____
17. Did you have a telephone or other conference with the regular teacher before you began teaching? _____
18. If you had a conference, was it helpful? _____
19. If you did not have a conference, would one have been helpful? _____

REMEMBER--base your answers to these questions on your most recent assignment not your present one.

20. How many hours per day on the average did you devote to correcting work handed in by the students? _____ hours.
21. Did you give the regular teacher a report of what had been accomplished during his or her absence? _____ If "yes," in what manner? _____
22. Did you perform any extra duties while on this assignment? (Extra duties not assigned to the regular teacher, such as an additional study hall, additional playground duty, et cetera) _____
23. Did you have any free periods? _____
24. Who signed you in at the school? _____
25. Did this person supply you with information about the school routines? _____ If so, was it satisfactory? _____
26. Were you escorted to the room? _____ By whom? _____
27. Did someone help you find the lesson plans, et cetera? _____ Who? _____
28. Were you introduced to the students? _____ By whom? _____
29. Were you shown where to leave your wraps? _____ By whom? _____
30. Was the restroom pointed out? _____ By whom? _____

31. Were you told when your lunch hour would be and where to find the cafeteria? _____
32. Did anyone offer to accompany you to lunch? _____
Who? _____
33. Were you introduced to other teachers? _____
34. Were you thanked for coming? _____ If so, by whom? _____
35. Did you find other teachers friendly? _____
36. Did the regular teachers welcome you in the cafeteria? _____
37. Did the principal visit any of your classes during the day? _____
38. Were you told about the availability of visual aids? _____
By whom? _____ Did you use any? _____
39. Was the assignment upon which you based your answers to these questions typical of most assignments you receive? _____

The following questions apply to your general substitute teaching experiences.

1. What part of your substitute teaching assignments have been in subject areas in which you feel qualified to teach?
Check one. ___ Less than 1/4; ___ 1/4 to 1/2; ___ 1/2 to 3/4; ___ 3/4 to all.
2. For how many different teachers have you substituted during the 1960-1961 school year? _____
3. How many days did you substitute teach during the 1960-1961 school year? _____
4. In how many schools did you serve? _____
5. Do you believe that refusal to accept an assignment will cut down your future calls? _____
6. In which school did you serve most? _____
7. On what basis do you think substitute assignments are made? _____

8. Do you believe you have enough advance notice to reach the school? Check one. ☐ Usually ☐ Seldom ☐ Never.
9. Is the amount of advance notice a problem to you? ☐ Yes; ☐ No.
10. Can you suggest ways in which the problem of too little advance notice could be minimized? _____

11. What has been the general attitude of the students toward you? ☐ Respectful; ☐ Cooperative; ☐ Indifferent; ☐ Unruly
12. Have you been given any instruction for acute discipline problems? ☐ If so, what? _____
By whom? _____
13. Do you think you have less prestige than the regular teacher? _____
14. Do you feel the administration looks upon substitute teachers as "baby sitters?" _____
15. Do you usually find more discipline problems in one age or grade group than another? ☐ If so, in which group? _____
16. Do you feel free to ask the office for help with discipline? _____
17. Do you tend to find puzzling markings in teacher's grade books? (that is, markings which are not standard or are not explained) _____

1. What do you consider to be the greatest problems you have faced as a substitute teacher?

2. What recommendations could you make for improving the effectiveness of the substitute teaching program in Fort Dodge?